

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1-14 and withdraw claims 15-20 from consideration, without prejudice or disclaimer to continued examination on the merits:

1. (Currently Amended) A single layer air-laid ~~composition~~ absorbent pad comprising: hollow synthetic fiber, absorbent, and a binder system, wherein said binder system is a bicomponent fiber, and wherein said absorbent further comprises wood pulp fluff, and wherein said binder system, said hollow synthetic fiber, and said absorbent are bound together into a unitary structure.

2. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ absorbent pad of claim 1, wherein said hollow fiber comprises from about 10 to about 50 percent by weight of said composition.

3. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ absorbent pad of claim 1, wherein said hollow synthetic fiber has a denier of between about 2 to about 18.

4. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ absorbent pad of claim 1, wherein said hollow synthetic fiber is selected from the class of polyolefins, polyesters, polyamides, acrylics, as well as mixtures and copolymers thereof.

5. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition of claim 4~~ absorbent pad of claim 4, wherein said polyester is polyethylene terephthalate.

6. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ absorbent pad of claim 1, wherein said bicomponent fiber comprises from about 3 to about 15 percent by weight of said composition.

7. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ absorbent pad of claim 1, wherein suitable bicomponent fibers are selected from the class of polyethylene/polypropylene; polyethylene/polyester; polypropylene/polyester; copolyester/polyethylene terephthalate; nylon 6/nylon 6,6; and nylon 6/polyethylene terephthalate.

8. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition of claim 7~~ absorbent pad of claim 7, wherein said polyethylene/polyester is a grafted polyethylene/ polyethylene terephthalate.

9. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ absorbent pad of claim 1, wherein said absorbent comprises from about 40% to about 80% of the weight of said composition.

10. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition~~ absorbent pad of claim 1, wherein said absorbent further comprises a natural absorbent, or a synthetic absorbent, or a mixture of these.

11. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition claim 10~~ absorbent pad of claim 10, wherein said natural absorbent is selected from the class of ~~wood pulp fluff~~, cotton, cotton linters, and regenerated cellulose fibers, or a mixture of these.

12. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition claim 10~~ absorbent pad of claim 10, wherein said synthetic absorbent is selected from the class of agar, pectin, guar gum, and synthetic hydrogel polymers.

13. (Currently Amended) The ~~composition claim 12~~ absorbent pad of claim 12, wherein said synthetic hydrogel polymers are selected from the class of carboxymethyl cellulose, alkali metal salts of polyacrylic acid, polyacrylamides, polyvinyl alcohol, ethylene maleic anhydride copolymers, polyvinyl ethers, hydroxypropyl cellulose,

polyvinyl morpholinone, polymers and copolymers of vinyl sulfonic acid, polyacrylates, polyacrylamides, polyvinyl pyridine, and mixtures of these.

14. (Currently Amended) The air-laid ~~composition-claim-1~~ absorbent pad of claim 1, wherein said composition comprises an absorbent core in fenestration drapes, dental bibs, eye pads, incontinent pads, sanitary napkins, wet wipes, and wound dressing pads.

15. (Withdrawn) A process of making a single layer air-laid web comprising:
mixing hollow fibers, absorbent, and binder fibers;
depositing said mixture onto a moving conveyor belt;
heating said deposited mixture to a temperature sufficient to melt said binder fibers; and
cooling said web thereby forming a structurally rigid web;
wherein said absorbent further comprises wood fluff pulp; and
wherein said binder fibers further comprise bicomponent fibers.

16. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 15, wherein said hollow fiber comprises from about 10 to about 50 percent by weight of said web.

17. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 15, wherein said binder fibers comprise from about 3 to about 15 percent by weight of said web.

18. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 15, wherein said absorbent comprises from about 60 percent to about 80 percent of the weight of said web.

19. (Withdrawn) A process of making a rigid single layer air-laid web comprising:
mixing hollow fibers and absorbent fibers;

depositing said mixture onto a surface thereby creating a loose web;
bonding said loose web thereby creating a rigid unitary web.

20. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 19, wherein said hollow fibers comprise from about 10 to about 50 percent by weight of said web.